

学校编码: 10384

学号: 12020111152639

分类号____密级____
UDC____

厦门大学

硕士学位论文

《教授的房子》中的现代性

Modernity in *The Professor's House*

谢佳婧

指导教师姓名: 周郁蓓 教授

专业名称: 英语语言文学

论文提交日期: 2014 年 04 月

论文答辩日期: 2014 年 05 月

学位授予日期: 2014 年 月

答辩委员会主席: _____

评阅人: _____

2014 年 04 月

厦门大学

厦门大学学位论文原创性声明

本人呈交的学位论文是本人在导师指导下,独立完成的研究成果。本人在论文写作中参考其他个人或集体已经发表的研究成果,均在文中以适当方式显性标明,并符合法律规范和《厦门大学研究生学术活动规范(试行)》。

另外,该学位论文为()课题(组)的研究成果,获得()课题(组)经费或实验室的资助,在()实验室完成。(请在以上括号内填写课题或课题组负责人或实验室名称,未有此项声明内容的,可以不作特别声明。)

声明人(签名):

年 月 日

厦门大学学位论文著作权使用声明

本人同意厦门大学根据《中华人民共和国学位条例暂行实施办法》等规定保留和使用此学位论文，并向主管部门或其指定机构送交学位论文（包括纸质版和电子版），允许学位论文进入厦门大学图书馆及其数据库被查阅、借阅。本人同意厦门大学将学位论文加入全国博士、硕士学位论文共建单位数据库进行检索，将学位论文的标题和摘要汇编出版，采用影印、缩印或者其它方式合理复制学位论文。

本学位论文属于：

（ ） 1. 经厦门大学保密委员会审查核定的保密学位论文，
于 年 月 日解密，解密后适用上述授权。

（ ） 2. 不保密，适用上述授权。

（请在以上相应括号内打“√”或填上相应内容。保密学位论文应是已经厦门大学保密委员会审定过的学位论文，未经厦门大学保密委员会审定的学位论文均为公开学位论文。此声明栏不填写的，默认为公开学位论文，均适用上述授权。）

声明人（签名）：

年 月 日

Abstract

Willa Cather's special enchantment with the American Southwest and the Nebraska prairie has made her a regional writer. Although she lived through the first half of the twentieth century, most of her works are about the frontier life and early European immigrants of the previous century. Her nostalgia is often read by critics as escapism from or indifference to her contemporary era. However, *The Professor's House*, published in 1925, proves to be her first novel of a totally different subject matter and innovative structure. In *The Professor's House*, the vast Nebraska prairie and tranquil pastoral life are replaced by a modern Mid-Western city near Lake Michigan and the modern life overcrowded with money, dullness and mediocrity. The protagonist Professor St. Peter is an intellectual and cosmopolitan whose values conflict with his surrounding environment. After the completion of his history works, he indulges himself more and more in his memory of the past. The professor's alienation grows intense and nearly leads him to suicide in the end.

This thesis explores Willa Cather's engagement with her era in *The Professor's House* based on an analysis of aesthetic and literary modernity. Modernity characterized by instrumental rationality promotes the development of modern cities and bureaucracies, but also conflicts with the individual's value rationality, and pours the modern man in a maelstrom of disunity, which is the manifestation of modernity crisis. Cather's aesthetic modernity is manifested in her reflection on modernity and the concern for the existence and emotional state of the modern man living in a world of chaos and change. Furthermore, this novel shows a strong sense of literary modernity as Cather chooses to represent the protagonist's spiritual state by adopting modernistic writing techniques such as a fractured structure, juxtaposition and shifts in narrative perspectives.

Key Words: Willa Cather; *The Professor's House*; Modernity

摘 要

薇拉·凯瑟对美国中西部和内布拉斯加大草原的迷恋为她赢得了地域作家的称号。尽管她大多生活在二十世纪前半叶，凯瑟的大部分作品都是关于十九世纪早期欧洲移民者的边疆生活。她的怀旧主题被很多批评家认为是逃避主义和漠视社会现实的表现。然而，发表于 1925 年的小说《教授的房子》在主题和写作手法上与之前的作品有着显著差异。在《教授的房子》中，广阔的内布拉斯加大草原和宁静的生活不见了，取而代之的是位于密歇根湖畔的中西部现代城市和充斥着金钱，乏味和平庸的现代生活。主人公圣彼得教授作为一个知识分子，在价值观上和他所处的环境发生了冲突。在他的历史巨著完成后，教授陷入了对过去的回忆中。

本论文从审美现代性和文学现代性分析入手，探讨了《教授的房子》中薇拉·凯瑟对现代社会的关照。以工具理性为特征的现代性促进了城市的发展和官僚机构的出现，但也和个人的价值理性发生冲突，将现代人卷入混乱的大漩涡中，这正是现代性危机的表征。小说的审美现代性体现在薇拉·凯瑟对现代性的反思以及对现代人生存和情感状态的关怀。另外，凯瑟采用如断裂的结构，并置和视角转化等现代性写作技巧来进一步突出主人公与现代社会的冲突，体现了强烈的文学现代性。

关键词：薇拉·凯瑟 《教授的房子》 现代性

Table of Contents

Abstract	I
Introduction	1
Chapter One Introduction to Modernity and Willa Cather's Modernity	11
1.1 Defining Modernity	11
1.2 Crisis of Modernity and Aesthetic Modernity	13
1.2.1 Crisis of Modernity	13
1.2.2 Aesthetic Modernity	15
1.3 Willa Cather's Modernity in <i>The Professor's House</i>	17
Chapter Two Aesthetic Modernity: Crisis of Modernity and Reflection	21
2.1 Materialized Reality Driven by Instrumental Rationality	21
2.1.1 Modern Cities and Bureaucracies	22
2.1.2 The Marselluses	25
2.2 Broken and Alienated Self under the Crisis of Modernity	28
2.2.1 Professor St. Peter and Tom Outland	28
2.2.2 Alienation and Conflicts	31
2.3 Reflection and Salvation	35
Chapter Three Literary Modernity: Modernistic Writing Techniques	38
3.1 Narrative Structure: a Nouvelle into Roman	39
3.2 Narrative Time: Juxtaposition of the Past and the Present	43
3.3 Narrative Perspectives	48
Conclusion	56

References	58
-------------------------	-----------

Acknowledgements	63
-------------------------------	-----------

目 录

摘要.....	II
绪论.....	1
第一章 现代性简介及薇拉·凯瑟的现代性.....	11
1.1 现代性定义.....	11
1.2 现代性危机及审美现代性.....	13
1.2.1 现代性危机.....	13
1.2.2 审美现代性.....	15
1.3 《教授的房子》中薇拉·凯瑟的现代性.....	17
第二章 审美现代性：现代性危机及反思.....	21
2.1 工具理性压制下物化的现实.....	21
2.1.1 现代城市和官僚机构.....	22
2.1.2 马修拉斯夫妇.....	25
2.2 现代性危机下分裂和异化的自我.....	28
2.2.1 教授和汤姆·奥兰德.....	28
2.2.2 异化和冲突.....	31
2.3 反思和救赎.....	35
第三章 文学现代性：现代性写作技巧.....	38
3.1 叙事结构.....	39
3.2 叙事时间：过去与现在的并置.....	43
3.3 叙事视角.....	48
结论.....	56
参考文献.....	58

致谢.....	63
---------	----

厦门大学博硕士论文摘要库

Introduction

If I can only hold to the memory

I can bear any future. But I must find out

The truth about the past, for the sake of the memory. (T.S. Eliot *Cocktail Party*)

For many critics, Willa Cather is “preeminently an artist dominated by her sense of the past, seeking constantly, through widely differing symbolisms, to recapture her childhood and youth” (Fadiman 196). Willa Cather’s obsession with the past is reflected in her constantly looking back to the Nebraska Prairie, ancient Indian pueblos and Greek mythologies. She achieved her literary stature and became a major American writer after the publication of three Nebraska novels: *O Pioneer!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915) and *My Antonia* (1918). The simple and idyllic life on the Nebraska Prairie depicted by Cather has impressed readers at home and abroad. In *The Stuff of Our Forebears: Willa Cather’s Southern Heritage*, Joyce McDonald sums up her characteristic pastoral motifs: “the urge to celebrate the simplicities of a natural order; the urge to idealize a golden age almost always associate with childhood; and the urge to criticize a contemporary social situation according to an earlier and purer set of standards” (McDonald 3). Cather’s obsession with the past has been interpreted by critics from various perspectives. Favorable criticism highlights the power of the past for Cather in reconstructing one’s inner self and illuminating the present and future. Willa Cather is regarded as “the Novelist-of-the-Pioneers-Turned-Escapist” (Middleton 19) who looked back with nostalgia to a heroic lost past by Jo Ann Middleton, while Lewis P. Simpson suggests reading Cather’s “retreat into the pastoral mode in the form of the plantation narrative, which served as an antidote to an increasingly industrialized world” (Simpson 69). Simpson’s ecologist reading of Cather’s novels reflects the author’s attempt of reestablishing a harmonious relationship between human and nature, which is, in a sense, also an attempt of

reconstructing a heroic pastoral past, and “in creating the image of the past, we create ourselves” (46). C. Barry Chabot deems Willa Cather a skillful writer as she “represents an alternative that is simultaneously personal and oriented toward the past” and points out the importance of her past for the subject-matter in Cather’s novels (Chabot 3). Even though Cather left Nebraska in her early twentieth, and worked and lived for many years in industrial Pittsburgh and then modern New York, “the era of her childhood in Nebraska, and other frontier communities even more remote in time and place, had uniquely provided conditions for satisfying lives” (3). These conditions can actually be restored by “contemplating memories and reconstructions of such lost social memories” (3). By recalling the past that never quite existed, Cather was able to “reveal at every point the inadequacies of the present” (63).

In the meantime, there are also less favorable voices that regard Willa Cather’s nostalgia as escapism. Cather’s obsession with her past and the nation’s past reflects her indifference and neglect of her contemporary era. Guy J. Reynolds points out that “Cather became the focus of a heated debate about ideology, a debate where she was repeatedly cast as a writer alienated from her age; an author fixated by nostalgia and elegy rather than by the contemporary world” (Reynolds 20). Beginning in the 1930s, Cather’s reputation suffered a decline which, according to Sharon O’Brien, resulted from a political and social climate in the United States. Cather’s nostalgic and pastoral writing was criticized as escapism. This point of view reached a climax when the critic Granville Hicks published “The Case against Willa Cather” in the *English Journal* in 1933. Hicks thought that Cather “has made the wrong choice” (Hicks 710), and regarded Cather as “never once trying to see the contemporary life as it is; she sees only what is lack in the past, at least in her idealization of it had. Thus she has been barred from the task that has occupied most of the world’s great artists, the expression of what is central and fundamental in her own age.” (708) In Hick’s opinion, the wrong choice refers to “the nostalgic and romantic elements” (710) which were so apparent in her later works. These elements might be justified in her early prairie novels, but at the turn of the twentieth century, with huge changes in

social circumstances, she should not indulge herself in the past any more and mislead her readers. Apparently, Hicks regarded Cather's escapism as lack of social responsibility as an artist. Cather retorted simply by saying "what has art ever been but escape" (Cather, *On Writing* 18). Cather disdained the assertion that "when the world is in a bad way, we are told, it is the business of the composer and the poet to devote himself to propaganda and fan the flames of indignation" and she further insisted that "art has never contributed anything to help matters—except escape" (18-19). According to Jo Ann Middleton, critics of the 1920s and the 1930s categorized Cather as simplistic and nostalgic. Furthermore, although she lived until 1947, and her most representing novels were published in the first and second decades of the twentieth century, when the ferment of American literary modernism was most intense, she did not earn her a place which was equal or comparable to those won by Eliot, Hemingway, Stevens, and Faulkner. She may be regarded by some as similar to or different from those literary figures known as "modernist", but "her similarities have far too often been ignored" (Middleton 10). In George William Greene's words, Cather is definitely a modernist writer, however, the modernist fictions she wrote "are seriously weakened by her incapacity to face modern reality and by a repetitious inclination to idealize the past" (Greene 578). For these critics, her constantly resorting to the personal and historical past designates her an escapist and shows few signs of living in an age when the style, technique and content of the novel have become more and more challenging and experimental.

However, recent studies begin to address the nature of Cather's modernism. There has been an emerging voice arguing for Willa Cather's concern about her contemporary social life hidden in her seemingly escape from a materialized world. Edward A. Bloom and Lilian D. Bloom clearly declare that "like many conscientious American writers, she was profoundly aware of the growing cleavage in her society between moral values and expedient action" (Bloom and Bloom 40). When *Sixteen Modern American Authors* was published in 1974, Willa Cather was the only woman to be included. Bernice Slote concludes two causes of Cather's being neglected as a modernist writer. The first one is due to her escapism, and the other is that "her books

had an apparent simplicity and clarity that seemed not to make intellectual demands” (Slote 39). Kathleen Wheeler in *“Modernist” Women Writers and Narrative Art* highlights Cather’s use of opposition, oppositions between “country and city life, between society, or family, and the individual’s need for solitude, between artistic genius and mediocrity, between nature and the urban” (Wheeler 20). Wheeler argues that Cather’s use of opposition results from her disenchantment with modern life and “her own values and beliefs seemed to her to diverge increasingly from the consumerism and material, machine-age advances of the post-war period” (20). C. Barry Chabot included Cather as a major American writer in *Writers for the Nation: American Literary Modernism*, which was published in 1997, and he gave Willa Cather the same position as T.S. Eliot, Allan Tate and Wallace Stevens, “who are widely considered to be central to American literary modernism” (Chabot 1). Although Cather is rarely “included in any such census” (1), she and their contemporaries have shared “a common project that we can now see resulted in the emergence of American literary modernism as a distinctive and unusually strong body of literature” (2).

For scholars who have written about Cather’s modernism, there are two main kinds of views. The first one emphasizes the narrative art and aesthetic value of her fictions or their affinities with the ideals of particular modernist writers, such as Henry James and Virginia Woolf. Jo Ann Middleton, in *Willa Cather’s Modernism: A Study of Style and Technique*, assumes that “we can better understand Cather’s attitude toward art if we understand her techniques as rooted in a manner of perception, which we have come to call modern” (Middleton 10). And the manner of perception lies in Cather’s modernist affinities that elucidate her work. Joan Acocella, in *Willa Cather and the Politics of Criticism*, argues that although “the nobility of her characters, and the privacy she allows them, are an inheritance from the nineteenth century, one that did not go down well in the twenties, a decade determined to throw off the nineteenth century”, Cather’s austere style is “part of modernist classicism; her tragic vision, part of modernist pessimism” (Acocella 23). Phyllis Rose actually deemed Cather a modernist and she based her argumentation on Cather’s “modernist urge to simplify

Degree papers are in the "[Xiamen University Electronic Theses and Dissertations Database](#)". Full texts are available in the following ways:

1. If your library is a CALIS member libraries, please log on <http://etd.calis.edu.cn/> and submit requests online, or consult the interlibrary loan department in your library.
2. For users of non-CALIS member libraries, please mail to etd@xmu.edu.cn for delivery details.